



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
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# Press Release

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL MCGRAW  
OBTAINS \$20,610 IN REFUNDS FOR 1,143 WV CONSUMERS  
OF ILLEGAL FEES CHARGED BY CENTRAL PARKING SYSTEM**

Last November, P. J. Allen of Hurricane, a retired ironworker, parked for about one hour at an unattended lot next to the old Cagney's Restaurant in Charleston while visiting his doctor at the Pain Clinic. He saw no signs indicating that there was a charge to park in the lot.

Several weeks later he discovered a small slip of paper below his car windshield wiper charging him \$11 for failing to pay a \$1 fee to Central Parking System. He called about the bill that day but the company's manager, David Horn, said he now owed \$36. Mr. Allen questioned the fee and complained to Attorney General Darrell McGraw, which led to an investigation that uncovered more than \$20,000 in illegal fees that had been collected from West Virginia consumers.

Today, Mr. Allen's complaint bore fruit for himself and numerous other consumers. Attorney General McGraw announced that Central Parking System of Nashville, Tennessee, has signed a settlement agreement with his office in which it agreed to refund \$20,610 in unlawful fees collected from 1,143 consumers who parked at nine unattended lots operated by the company in Charleston. The company also promised to refrain from adding unlawful charges to parking fees at its lots in the future.

Consumers who parked at Central Parking System's private lots were asked to pay in advance by depositing the fee in a drop box along with a ticket that listed their parking stall number. A Central Parking System employee checked the boxes periodically to collect the fees. Consumers who failed to pay found a small notice on their windshield wiper demanding an additional fee of \$10 and warning of referral to a collection agency. Accounts unpaid after 14 days were referred to Ticket Track, Inc., of Spokane, Washington and an additional "collection fee" of \$25 was added.

During the investigation, the Attorney General's office also learned that Ticket Track was not licensed to collect debts in West Virginia. In the agreement announced today, Central Parking System also promised to refrain from hiring outside collection agencies like Ticket Track without first ensuring that such companies are licensed and bonded to collect debts in West Virginia.

Attorney General McGraw stated, "Central Parking System operated private parking lots without any on-site employees to oversee operations and collect fees for parking. Many consumers, like Mr. Allen, never realized a fee was being charged and were surprised when they were billed for exorbitant amounts. Central Parking System is entitled to charge whatever the market will bear for parking and to pursue lawful collection means when necessary, but it is against the law to add additional collection fees as Central Parking System did in West Virginia."

Any persons wishing to file a complaint about a consumer matter or to alert the Attorney General about unfair or deceptive practices may do so by calling the Consumer Protection Hotline, 1-800-368-8808

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